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THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND RURAL YOUTH.

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THE INCREASING AMERICAN TECHNOLOGICAL LEVEL HAS DECREASED THE LEVEL OF AVAILABLE FARM OCCUPATIONS. BECAUSE OF THIS, RURAL YOUTH ARE URGED TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION, SINCE JOB PLACEMENT WILL PROBABLY BE IN URBAN AREAS. RURAL YOUTH WILL RECEIVE HELP FROM THE UNITED STATES EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (U.S.E.S.), WHICH IS ATTEMPTING TO REDUCE AND PREVENT UNEMPLOYMENT IN RURAL AREAS, AS WELL AS STUDY THE SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS OF RURAL YOUTH. U.S.E.S. SERVICES INVOLVE THE DISPERSAL OF OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION, TESTING AND COUNSELING, AND JOB PLACEMENT. SPECIAL PROGRAMS INCLUDE EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAMS OF INDIVIDUAL ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT, EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR REMOTE AREAS, TRAINING PROGRAMS, AND ORIENTATION FOR THOSE WHO MIGRATE TO THE URBAN AREAS. THIS PAPER WAS PREPARED FOR PRESENTATION AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROBLEMS OF RURAL YOUTH IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT (SEPTEMBER 1963). (JS)

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ABSTRACT

THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND RURAL YOUTH

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The employment problems of rural youth are less evident and dramatic than those of urban youth, but they are equally great. Job opportunities in farm work are rapidly disappearing. Agricultural productivity has been increasing at 2 and 1/2 to 3 times the rate of the non-agricultural economy. The number of farm youths who can "stay down on the farm" and still support themselves and their potential families will continue to decline as it has been doing for some years. The rural youngster is compelled to seek his fortune outside of farm activity, usually in an urban center, although he may be quite unprepared by training or experience for the urban labor market.

The primary message the Employment Service has for rural, as well as urban, youth is: Pursue your education. There are virtually no job openings for the unskilled and untrained. Rural youth who do not plan to go to college should get as much trade and industrial training as possible in high school. School dropouts face almost insurmountable problems in the job market; many of today's hard core unemployed are the school dropouts of 15 to 20 years ago.

The Employment Service gathers and publishes a wealth of information designed to help young people choose, prepare for, and obtain suitable employment. It has also developed aptitude tests, notably the GATB, to help youngsters determine their job potentialities, and provide vocational counseling services to supplement whatever guidance is available in rural schools. The Employment Service can be of major assistance to the rural youth in actually placing him in a job. It is well informed on local and nearby job opportunities and, through its interarea recruitment service, on job openings and specifications across the country.

The Employment Service is also engaged in the broader aspects of reducing and preventing unemployment in rural areas. It has cooperated with the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce in the Experimental Rural Area Program (ERAP) and in developing the Smaller Communities Program which has been in operation in a number of rural, low-income areas with declining employment opportunities. In these areas, employment development is combined with a continuing program of employment services.

Through its research facilities, the Employment Service will pursue the study of the special employment problems of rural youth. It will improve and extend its services wherever necessary and possible. To aid this effort, leaders of rural communities should come to know the Employment Service better. It has evolved in recent years from a mere labor exchange to a community manpower center. It is greatly interested in helping rural communities and rural youth develop and make the best possible use of their job potentialities.

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Director, U. S. Employment Service

OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES AND RURAL YOUTH

It is significant and commendable that we should have a national conference such as this concentrating on the problem of rural youth. In our national concern for the employment future of our young people, there is a tendency to lose sight of and neglect the special problems of rural, as opposed to urban youth. Out-of-school and out-of-work young people concentrated in the slum areas of our large cities are highly visible. Surveys in some large city slum areas have shown that 63-80 percent of the boys and girls 16 to 21 years of age were not in school and considered themselves unemployed. Their problems, dramatized in crime statistics, rising juvenile delinquency, and such things as dope addiction, have been brought forcefully to the attention of the public. Their situation, characterized as "social dynamite" by Dr. James B. Conant in his book, Slums and Suburbs, has sparked the creation of a number of government and privately sponsored groups devoted to developing experimental approaches to new and better solutions of the social and economic problems these youths represent.

The problems of rural youth are less evident and less dramatic, but they are equally great. They are, in fact, more difficult to deal with just because they have not aroused as much public concern. Rural youth unemployment is less visible because it is not so concentrated. It is potentially of a less explosive quality than urban youth unemployment. But, for the individual, it is as tragic, and for society, as wasteful of human resources.

Job opportunities in farm work are rapidly disappearing. While mechanization and automation are popularly associated with nonfarm industry, in recent years technological change in agriculture has far surpassed that in urban industries. Productivity on the farm has been increasing at two and one-half to three times the rate of the nonagricultural economy. As a result, there has been a continuing reduction in the need for farm labor, and a stepped-up exodus of farm youth who must seek jobs in urban centers. Not more than one person in 10 now born on a farm can expect to earn enough from farm operation during his working years to maintain a minimum American standard of living. The number of farm youths who can "stay down on the farm" and still support themselves and their potential families will continue to decline as it has been doing for some years.

The problem is not confined, as some may suppose, to areas of marginal, inefficient farming, nor to localities where there are large numbers of Negroes in the farm population. It exists, as well, in relatively prosperous Iowa and in the Dakotas. In fact, job opportunities in farming are more likely to disappear in areas where prosperity makes possible ever larger

investments of capital in pesticides, fertilizers, and the like, which increase output, and in mechanized equipment which replaces labor. For the youngster, then, growing up in a rural area to face his future, it is not a simple question of migration to another agricultural area. The rural youth cannot leave his home farm and hope to find a job on another one somewhere else. He is compelled to seek his fortune outside of agricultural activity, usually in an urban center.

These farm youngsters are likely to be quite unprepared, however, by either training or experience, for the highly competitive urban labor market. In the large cities, where the great bulk of the job opportunities are, the labor markets have become very complex, and the problem of searching out available job openings is very difficult, especially for an inexperienced young jobseeker.

Rural youngsters must not feel, however, that they are not competitive in the job market. In fact, employers may prefer them to city dwellers because they are more apt to have what are sometimes referred to as old-fashioned virtues. Their environmental background has accustomed them to the daily chore, to the discipline of work, to early rising, and, in many instances, has provided some experience with the use of tools and the repair of machines.

But their orientation is not to nonfarm occupations. Their circumscribed environment has given them no first hand contact with occupations outside their experience and which they, therefore, may not even be able to imagine. They have not been able to observe a wide array of workers in action. A demonstration project conducted by the Iowa State Employment Service in 1958-60 in Waterloo and Creston found that most of the rural youth were not well informed about urban occupations, the job opportunities they might provide, and the preparation and training they require.

NEED FOR EDUCATION

More and more professional and technical skill and education are the key requirements of the job opportunities in the urban labor markets. There are virtually no openings for the unskilled and untrained. The rural youngster is frequently at a disadvantage vis-a-vis his city cousin in obtaining the necessary foundation. Resources for education and vocational training are usually even less adequate in rural than in urban areas. School standards are generally geared to the less demanding needs of an agricultural economy. There are often no educational and vocational guidance counselors in the schools. Even many city schools lack these. The rural youth, therefore, even though he may exhaust all the local opportunities for education and job training available to him, frequently finds himself quite inadequately prepared for the strange world of work in the big city which he must enter.

This much is clear. A high school diploma is virtually a must for any kind of real success in the job market, and college training is a prerequisite for a wide range of occupations. Moreover, advanced education in science and in mathematics, well beyond the arithmetic level, are becoming ever more important in terms of hiring specifications. Youngsters must stay in school as long as possible and learn as much as possible. School dropouts

face almost insurmountable problems in the job market; many of today's hard-core unemployed are the school dropouts of 15 or 20 years ago.

Rural youth who do not plan to go on to college should get as much trade and industrial training in high school as possible. Those who have this training will find it far easier to obtain entry jobs in such occupations as machinist, auto and airplane mechanic, electrician, plumber, carpenter, bricklayer, welder, cook, baker, and repairman for all types of household appliances as well as other types of repair work. Employment opportunities in clerical and sales occupations and in many kinds of services are expected to expand. Jobs of this latter variety are often available in the local rural area or within commuting distance from home in these days when it is not unusual to travel 20 - 30 miles to work. The Employment Service is also able to supply labor market information pertaining to agriculturally-related occupations.

It is not my intention to discuss the whole broad subject of education in this country. That is outside the purview of the Employment Service. It is however, the responsibility of the Employment Service to provide information on employers' hiring specifications not only to young people and their parents, but also to the schools so that they can make every effort to provide the educational and vocational training facilities needed so urgently. The first and primary message the Employment Service has for rural, as well as for urban, youth is: Pursue your education.

U.S.E.S. SERVICES TO RURAL YOUTH

OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

Education for what? For what kind of work should I prepare myself, the young person asks. The Employment Service gathers and publishes a wealth of information which can be useful in answering these questions. Much of the information is pointed directly at the problems of youth. The Employment Service has long recognized the special needs of young people. A Junior Division of the first USES was created in December 1918, nearly 45 years ago. Today, special youth divisions of the Employment Service are devoted to helping young people choose, prepare for, and obtain suitable employment. Among the valuable materials prepared by experts and published for public use are Job Guide for Young Workers which gives high-light information about 100 occupations open to high school graduates, Career Guide for Demand Occupations which contains summary information about occupations for which there is a shortage of workers, How to Get and Hold the Right Job which gives helpful hints to the young job seeker, and Choosing Your Occupation which is a general vocational guidance pamphlet. Thousands of these, and other pamphlets and bulletins, have been distributed by the Employment Service to school counselors and youth, and are available on request from the State employment offices. The Dictionary of Occupational Titles, developed by the Employment Service, contains a detailed description of at least 25,000 occupations in the American economy for which a young person may hope to prepare himself, in the light of his interests and potentialities. It is available at many schools and at the local offices of the public employment service.

TESTING AND COUNSELING

In planning their education and working futures, young people need special help in determining their own potentialities for the job of their choice as well as information on what the job requires. Youngsters often have but a limited understanding of their own interests and capabilities. The USES, and its affiliated State agencies often in cooperation with employers, unions, and other organizations, have developed aptitude tests for specific occupations. These aptitude tests help the inexperienced worker come to a better understanding of his potentialities for acquiring occupational skills, and help him in making an intelligent vocational decision. The best known of these tests is the General Aptitude Test Battery which was introduced in 1947. At that time, the Employment Service had just launched upon a nationwide counseling service for the returning veterans, many of whom were inexperienced workers. Now, in 1963, this test is being given in 1,400 local Employment Service offices and in over 10,000 public and parochial high schools. The Aptitudes measured by the GATB are: Intelligence, verbal aptitude, numerical aptitude, spatial aptitude, form perception, clerical perception, motor coordination, finger dexterity, and manual dexterity. These aptitudes measure the abilities required in most of the occupations in the American economy.

The GATB has been extensively acclaimed for its efficiency of measurement and for the extensive evidence of its occuaptional validity, unmatched by any other aptitude tests. It is generally regarded as the most outstanding aptitude test bettery used in vocational guidance and has won widespread acceptance by authorities in this field as an effective tool in the counseling and placement of inexperienced young workers as well as adults. It has also evoked an increasing amount of international interest through the years and is in use in 70 foreign countries. In the hands of experts, the GATB can be used in the counseling process, along with other counseling tools, to help a rural youth learn about his occupational potentials, interests, values, and personal traits, and to evaluate these in the light of occupational requirements and opportunities. His education and training can then be tailored to his needs.

Counseling provided by the Employment Service in rural areas to youth planning to enter the labor market supplements whatever guidance is available in the rural schools. However, the supply of well qualified counselors -- employment service or school counselors -- is inadequate for all needs and this situation is particularly true in rural areas. To meet this problem, some State Employment Services have developed plans for area counselors who divide their time among a number of small local office jurisdictions. In some cases a mobile testing service has also been developed. Available trained Employment Service staff go to the many places where they are needed. This has proved an efficient way of providing better service to rural youth, though it does not provide for the continuity which might be desirable. In some localities, employment service staff members travel many miles to outlying high schools to conduct counseling and placement interviews and to register seniors who will be seeking jobs after graduation. They often arrange for the transfer of job application records to urban offices where the young people may be seeking work, or try to get jobs for them in a nearby town.

JOB PLACEMENT

Of course, the ultimate service that can be rendered a rural youth seeking a suitable job, is to place him in one. For this purpose the local employment service office is a major source of assistance. Also, the employment service system links more than 1,900 local offices scattered over the country. Through the interarea recruitment service, the local employment service office has information on job openings and opportunities elsewhere, and can present to the young worker all the elements necessary to making an intelligent choice in a nationwide job market. This is of special importance to rural youth in that the entire country is thus opened as their job market. There is a bridge between the farm and urban areas.

However, resources and facilities of the Employment Service are used to provide services that go beyond finding jobs for individual unemployed workers. The Employment Service is also engaged in the broader aspects of reducing and preventing unemployment and in making contributions to the economies of rural areas. It works through and with other agencies, and with community leaders, to help attract new industry to the area and to encourage existing industry to expand and so to increase local job opportunities.

SPECIAL RURAL PROGRAMS

EXPERIMENTAL RURAL AREA PROGRAMS

During the last few years the Employment Service initiated a program in which it cooperates with the Department of Agriculture in a joint undertaking called the Experimental Rural Area Program (ERAP). The central purpose of the ERAP is to explore the contribution the Employment Service can make in helping residents of rural low-income areas to recognize the need for appropriate economic adjustment and to plan and take action to achieve it. The original experiment was carried out in areas in 4 States -- Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. A house-to-house survey was conducted and an inventory of the occupational potentials of job seekers was made as a result of personal interviews. A total of about 10,000 persons filed applications for employment, and about 7,000 were provided counseling service and 8,000 were given USES aptitude tests. Nearly 500 job openings were found in the areas and about 300 residents were placed in jobs in their own localities. As a further development of this program, new plants were opened in two of the areas. Community development organizations were initiated or rejuvenated in all four.

SMALLER COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

Using the experience acquired in the Experimental Rural Area Program, guidelines have been developed for a continuing program of employment services to rural, low-income areas remote from existing Employment Service local offices. This new effort, which has been in operation for a little more than a year, is the Smaller Communities Program. It operates in close cooperation with related programs of the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce. Under the general direction of a Rural Area Representative, who is a member of the

State Employment Service staff, a mobile team of experienced interviewers and counselors works in an area, usually for 3 or 4 months, registering, testing, and counseling the underemployed and the unemployed, and assigning to each job seeker an occupational dictionary code based on both experience and potential. The occupational codes are tabulated in several different ways. One reflects the work experience of members of the labor force, while another represents the potential for occupations which might become available if the economy of the area were expanded. This Occupational Potential Inventory gives an overall picture of the area's manpower resources. In the hands of the local economic development group, the inventory is an invaluable tool for initiating employment expansion plans which are realistic in terms of the area's assets. It can be used to develop promotional materials for use in attracting new industries and may form the basis of an Overall Economic Development Program necessary for assistance under the Area Redevelopment Act. By interpreting the potentialities of the work force in the community, Employment Service staff members frequently prove to be key figures in assisting community leaders in arriving at sound economic development plans.

When the mobile team leaves an area, all applicant and employer records are turned over to the local office regularly having administrative jurisdiction over the area so that future employment services to area residents are facilitated. The Rural Area Representative maintains regular contact with the community leaders to help them in their continuing employment development activities. He also provides information on Federal programs which might be of value in local community employment development, and ensures that the needs for follow-up counseling and placement services are recognized and met.

The Smaller Communites Program has been in operation in a number of rural, low-income areas with declining employment opportunities. Although these communities have succeeded in attracting a wide variety of industries, ranging from poultry processing to drug and rubber manufacture, not all rural areas can hope to develop a sufficient number of job opportunities for all their unemployed, underemployed, and young people entering the labor market. It is in relation to this problem that the program offers particular benefit by providing thousands of rural people with information on the possibilities of employment in surrounding areas, and with counseling, testing, and referral services to help them in their efforts to find suitable jobs. This two-pronged effort -- employment development combined with on-the-spot applicant services -- is a fresh approach to the employment problems of rural communities.

OTHER FEDERAL PROGRAMS

For rural and small-town youth, living in redevelopment areas, who wish to remain at home and prepare themselves for local or nearby jobs, the Area Redevelopment Act of 1961 provides a means for acquiring new skills. Up to 16 weeks of training can be financed while people from counties designated as "redevelopment areas" learn marketable skills. The Manpower Development and Training Act passed in 1962 also offers help. The Manpower Development and Training Act has provisions for the establishment of special programs for testing, counseling, and selection for training of youth 16 years of age and

older. The Act allows for the payment of training allowances to youth in the 19 to 22 year age group. The Bureau of Employment Security is working with the State agencies to establish special training programs for underprivileged youth, school dropouts, and the functionally illiterate. Further details of the ARA and MDTA training programs are provided in separate papers which describe each program.

ON-GOING SERVICES

For those youth who have to leave home to find suitable work in an urban center, the Employment Service is constantly providing special service. Special arrangements for the referral of youth from rural areas to urban centers have been made between Employment Service staff in neighboring States. Examples are Minnesota-Wisconsin and Nebraska-Iowa. Many young migrants to the city would well profit by group guidance sessions to speed their integration into city life. Such service is sometimes provided by group-working agencies such as the "Y's" and neighborhood houses. In some instances, the Employment Service stations staff in these centers. When volume justifies, an Employment Service staff member may head up what amounts to a part-time branch office in a crowded urban neighborhood. For example, such service is operating in Newark where there is a large in-migrant population of young people from the South and Puerto Rico.

Through its research facilities the Employment Service will continue to study the special employment problems of rural youth. It will also seek to:

1. Extend its program for seniors and drop-outs entering the labor market to more small schools.

2. Make more provision for the transfer of youth job applicants and their records from small offices to the larger city employment offices where opportunities are greater.

3. Make more provisions in the urban local offices for serving the rural youth who come to the city seeking work. In some cases, this will mean assigning a special person to serve them.

4. Expand the arrangements between States for placing youth in the cities which are the natural focus areas for youth from neighboring States.

5. Provide more area counselors to provide counseling services. This counseling will include information on the need for mobility and for acquiring necessary training for urban employment.

6. Continue to disseminate nationwide labor market information.

7. Continue to cooperate with the 4-H Clubs in their "Career Exploration" activities.

8. Cooperate in the preparation of educational material for rural parents to help them see the need for mobility and preparation

for out-of-town employment for many of their children and for the adjustments to a growing urban economy.

To best serve rural youth and their parents, leaders of rural communities should come to know the Employment Service better. There is a general misunderstanding among the uninformed that the Employment Service deals only with marginal workers -- that only those whose chances of getting and holding a good job are slim indeed, bother to come to the Employment Service for help. As a reflection of its long association with the payment of unemployment insurance benefits, the Employment Service is slurringly referred to by some as the "unemployment" service. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Employment Service is, in fact, a highly professional organization which, in its 30 years of existence, has become one of the most outstanding developers of trained staff and technical tools for labor market evaluation. Its Dictionary of Occupational Titles and General Aptitude Test Battery are unique contributions which have served as models both at home and abroad in many lands. Its labor market information, covering more than 1,000 local labor markets across the nation, is both comprehensive and up-to-date. Its network of local offices, linked by the operations of its interarea recruitment system, blanket the country. Its daily operations keep it in the closest possible touch with all kinds of job opportunities as they emerge. Placement service, "getting the best possible job for the worker and the best possible worker for the job," has always been the core of its activity.

Moreover, the Employment Service has evolved in recent years from a mere labor exchange to a community manpower center. It is concerned not only with accepting employers' orders for workers and referring workers to jobs, but also with manpower research and planning to anticipate long-range labor market needs, manpower development through training and retraining programs, manpower distribution through an effective placement service, and manpower utilization to assure full use of the Nation's manpower resources.

The Employment Services want to work closely with rural youth, their parents, and the schools to help the young make the best use of their potentialities as well as their fullest contribution to society. While it is not possible to provide full-time local offices in widely scattered rural areas, the Employment Service does arrange for service by providing area counselors, an interarea recruitment service, and rural area representatives. In addition, the Employment Service cooperates with the schools on an itinerant basis and with other groups in the community by furnishing them labor market and occupational information.